

Should the SSCA Endorse Candidates for Municipal Office?

This is a vexing question. SSCA has always endorsed candidates for council and the reeve, but most of us haven't been clear why the Association has done this, whether it should, and is so, how it should go about it.

When I was president this was the case and this ambiguity has continued. So in the summer of 2010, the Board asked me to head up an ad hoc committee that would examine these issues and report back this past summer. Bill McNeill and Chris Goulding, both members of the current Board, John Honderich and Jeff Clarke, members at large, joined my Committee.

Our findings entitled, **REPORT OF THE MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE**, which was approved by the board at its August meeting, is now posted on the SSCA website for you to read. Here in brief are its findings.

1. The Association should continue to endorse candidates for municipal office.
2. The Board should make a concerted and public effort to encourage people who may be thinking of running to come forward and discuss their candidacy with a view to gaining the Association's endorsement.
3. Nonetheless, the Board should hold all-candidates meetings and otherwise provide the means by which all the candidates can address the members of the Association.

The SSCA has a long history of robust political activism going back to the founding of the Township and possibly prior to that time. The candidates it has endorsed have won their seats, without exception. (If I'm wrong about this, please email me and your correction will be posted.)

This success has been the cause of understandable resentment especially as many of the Association's candidates have been drawn from a very small circle of former presidents and other members of the board. Therefore, it is extremely important that the board seek out potential candidates from among its membership and otherwise engage its members in the political process by holding all-candidates meetings. These are just two of the recommendations the Committee has made regarding how the process of selecting candidates could be made fairer and more transparent.

As it happens, this report is coming at a very opportune time, as many incumbents across the Township will likely be stepping down. However, we haven't heard officially from our Ward Four councillors as yet, but the Reeve has told me he won't be running. So the field is opening up and the Association will have to start planning for it beginning in the summer of 2012.

I welcome your questions and concerns about the report, so please email me at pennypepperell@rogers.com.

Penny Pepperell
Former President of SSCA
Advisory Board Member